

CLAIMS

[9000] We claim:

1 1: A method of point-of-sale activation and subsequent registration of products, said
2 method comprising the steps of:

- 3 (a) providing a package by which a product, being unactivated prior to sale, is sold
4 at a point-of-sale, said product having an activation code and said package
5 having a PIN;
- 6 (b) providing computer data storage apparatus within which said activation code is
7 associated with said PIN;
- 8 (c) transmitting said activation code over a first communications channel from said
9 point-of-sale to said computer data storage apparatus; then,
- 10 (d) having said computer data storage apparatus record that said PIN has been
11 activated and may be used to register said product; then,
- 12 (e) registering said product by transmitting said PIN over a second communications
13 channel to said computer data storage apparatus.

1 2: The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

- 2 (a) providing a kiosk at said point-of-sale for vending said package, said kiosk
3 being in communication with said computer data storage apparatus over said
4 first communications channel, said kiosk including a PIN applicator for
5 applying said PIN to said package; then,
- 6 (b) applying said PIN to said package by said PIN applicator; then,
- 7 (c) vending said package at said point-of-sale by said kiosk;
- 8 said package having said PIN subsequent to vending of said package by said kiosk but not
9 having said PIN prior to application of said PIN to said package by said PIN applicator.

1 3: The method as recited in claim 2, in which said PIN applicator is a printer.

1 4: The method as recited in claim 2, in which said PIN applicator applies a label to
2 said package, said label having said PIN thereon.

1 5: The method as recited in claim 1, in which said step of registering said product
2 further includes, after said transmitting of said PIN over said second communications
3 channel, the step of receiving an unlocking code for said product over said second
4 communications channel from said computer data storage apparatus.

1 6: The method as recited in claim 1, in which said package includes a URL via which
2 said computer data storage apparatus may be contacted over said second communications
3 channel, and said method further comprises the steps of:

4 (a) providing a computer being interfaced to said second communications channel;
5 and

6 (b) providing a communications program on said computer;

7 and said step of registering said product further includes, prior to said transmitting of said
8 PIN over said second communications channel, the steps of:

9 (c) providing said URL to said communications program; and

10 (d) establishing a data connection to said computer data storage apparatus over said
11 second communications channel via said URL.

1 7: The method as recited in claim 1, in which said computer data storage apparatus is
2 interfaced to said second communications channel via audio recognition means, and said step
3 of registering said product further comprises, prior to said transmitting of said PIN over said
4 second communications channel, the steps of:

- (a) providing a telephone; and
 - (b) establishing a telephonic connection between said telephone and said audio recognition means over said second communications channel;

8 and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel is via said
9 telephone to said audio recognition means.

8: The method as recited in claim 7, in which said telephone includes audio tone generation means for generating audio tones and said audio recognition means is a telephonic dialing tones recognizer, and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel includes the steps of:

- (a) causing said audio tone generation means to generate a sequence of telephonic dialing tones representing said PIN; and
 - (b) recognition of said sequence of telephonic dialing tones by said telephonic dialing tones recognizer.

1 9: The method as recited in claim 7, in which audio recognition means is an IVR, and
2 said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel includes the
3 steps of:

- 4 (a) causing said PIN to be spoken into said telephone; and
5 (b) recognition of said spoken PIN by said IVR.

1 10: The method as recited in claim 1, in which said package includes said activation
2 code and said activation code is machine-readable, and said method further includes the steps
3 of:

- 4 (a) providing an activation code reading apparatus at said point-of-sale; and,
5 (b) prior to transmitting said activation code over said first communications
6 channel, reading said activation code using said activation code reading
7 apparatus when said product is sold at said point-of-sale.

1 11: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said package includes a magnetic
2 strip onto which said activation code is encoded, and said activation code reading apparatus
3 is a magnetic strip reader.

1 12: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said activation code is optically
2 readable, and said activation code reading apparatus is an optical scanner.

1 13: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said package includes an ICC
2 element into which said activation code is encoded, and said activation code reading
3 apparatus is an ICC interface apparatus.

1 14: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said package obscures said PIN from
2 viewing by a human prior to presentation of said product at said point-of-sale.

1 15: The method as recited in claim 14, in which said package includes a removable
2 opaque covering and said PIN is obscured by said removable opaque covering.

1 16: The method as recited in claim 15, in which said activation code is on a top
2 surface of said removable opaque covering.

1 17: The method as recited in claim 15, in which said removable opaque covering is a
2 scratch-off opaque covering.

1 18: The method as recited in claim 17, in which said activation code is on a top
2 surface of said removable opaque covering.

1 19: The method as recited in claim 15, in which said removable opaque covering is a
2 peel-off opaque covering.

1 20: The method as recited in claim 19, in which said activation code is on a top
2 surface of said removable opaque covering.

1 21: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said step of registering said product
2 includes the steps of:

- 3 (a) providing an PIN-reading apparatus; and
4 (b) reading said PIN using said PIN-reading apparatus prior to said transmitting of
5 said PIN over said second communications channel.

1 22: The method as recited in claim 21, in which said package includes a magnetic
2 strip onto which said PIN is encoded, and said PIN-reading apparatus is a magnetic strip
3 reader.

1 23: The method as recited in claim 21, in which said PIN is optically readable, and
2 said PIN-reading apparatus is an optical scanner.

1 24: The method as recited in claim 21, in which said package includes an ICC
2 element into which said PIN is encoded, and said PIN-reading apparatus is an ICC interface
3 apparatus.

1 25: The method as recited in claim 21, in which said package includes computer data
2 storage media onto which said PIN is encoded, and said PIN-reading apparatus is computer
3 data storage media reader.

1 26: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said step of registering said product
2 further includes, after said transmitting of said PIN over said second communications
3 channel, the step of receiving an unlocking code for said product over said second
4 communications channel from said computer data storage apparatus.

1 27: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said package includes a URL via
2 which said computer data storage apparatus may be contacted over said second
3 communications channel, and said method further comprises the steps of:
4 (a) providing a computer being interfaced to said second communications channel;
5 and
6 (b) providing a communications program on said computer;
7 and said step of registering said product further includes, prior to said transmitting of said
8 PIN over said second communications channel, the steps of:
9 (c) providing said URL to said communications program; and
10 (d) establishing a data connection to said computer data storage apparatus over said
11 second communications channel via said URL.

1 28: The method as recited in claim 27, in which said step of registering said product
2 further includes the step of transmitting auxiliary registration data over said second
3 communications channel to said computer data storage apparatus.

1 29: The method as recited in claim 10, in which said computer data storage apparatus
2 is interfaced to said second communications channel via audio recognition means, and said
3 step of registering said product further comprises, prior to said transmitting of said PIN over
4 said second communications channel, the steps of:

- (a) providing a telephone; and
 - (b) establishing a telephonic connection between said telephone and said audio recognition means over said second communications channel;

8 and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel is via said
9 telephone to said audio recognition means.

30: The method as recited in claim 29, in which said telephone includes audio tape.

generation means for generating audio tones and said audio recognition means is a telephonic dialing tones recognizer, and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel includes the steps of:

- (a) causing said audio tone generation means to generate a sequence of telephonic dialing tones representing said PIN; and
 - (b) recognition of said sequence of telephonic dialing tones by said telephonic dialing tones recognizer.

31: The method as recited in claim 29, in which audio recognition means is an IVR, said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel includes steps of:

- (a) causing said PIN to be spoken into said telephone; and
 - (b) recognition of said spoken PIN by said IVR.

1 32: The method as recited in claim 1, in which said package further includes a
2 plurality of product registration cards, each said product registration card having a product
3 registration code thereon, and within said computer data storage apparatus each said product
4 registration code is associated with said PIN; said step of registering said product by
5 transmitting said PIN over said second communications channel further comprising the step
6 of having said computer data storage apparatus record that said PIN has been registered and
7 that each said product registration code may then be accepted; said method further
8 comprising the steps of, for each said product registration card:
9 (a) transmitting its said product registration code over a third communications
10 channel to said computer data storage apparatus; then,
11 (b) having said computer data storage apparatus verify that said its said product
12 registration code may be accepted; then
13 (c) accepting said product registration code by said computer data storage
14 apparatus.

- 1 33: A method of selling products at a point-of-sale with subsequent registration of
2 said products, said method comprising the steps of:
- 3 (a) providing a computer data storage apparatus remote from said point-of-sale;
4 (b) providing a package by which a product, being unactivated prior to sale, is sold
5 at said point-of-sale;
6 (c) providing a kiosk at said point-of-sale for vending said package, said kiosk
7 being in communication with said computer data storage apparatus over a first
8 communications channel, said kiosk including a PIN applicator for applying a
9 PIN to said package;
- 10 (d) transmitting said PIN over said first communications channel and between said
11 kiosk and said computer data storage apparatus;
12 (e) having said computer data storage apparatus record that said PIN has been
13 activated and may be used to register said product;
14 (f) applying said PIN to said package by said PIN applicator; then,
15 (g) vending said package at said point-of-sale by said kiosk; then,
16 (h) registering said product by transmitting said PIN over a second communications
17 channel to said computer data storage apparatus.

1 34: The method as recited in claim 33, in which said package includes a URL via

2 which said computer data storage apparatus may be contacted over said second

3 communications channel, and said method further comprises the steps of:

4 (a) providing a computer being interfaced to said second communications channel;

5 and

6 (b) providing a communications program on said computer;

7 and said step of registering said product further includes, prior to said transmitting of said

8 PIN over said second communications channel, the steps of:

9 (c) providing said URL to said communications program; and

10 (d) establishing a data connection to said computer data storage apparatus over said
11 second communications channel via said URL.

1 35: The method as recited in claim 34, in which said step of registering said product

2 further includes the step of transmitting auxiliary registration data over said second

3 communications channel to said computer data storage apparatus.

1 36: The method as recited in claim 33, in which said computer data storage apparatus

2 is interfaced to said second communications channel via audio recognition means, and said

3 step of registering said product further comprises, prior to said transmitting of said PIN over

4 said second communications channel, the steps of:

5 (a) providing a telephone; and

6 (b) establishing a telephonic connection between said telephone and said audio
7 recognition means over said second communications channel;

8 and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel is via said

9 telephone to said audio recognition means.

1 37: The method as recited in claim 36, in which said telephone includes audio tone

2 generation means for generating audio tones and said audio recognition means is a telephonic

3 dialing tones recognizer, and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second

4 communications channel includes the steps of:

5 (a) causing said audio tone generation means to generate a sequence of telephonic
6 dialing tones representing said PIN; and

7 (b) recognition of said sequence of telephonic dialing tones by said telephonic
8 dialing tones recognizer.

1 38: The method as recited in claim 36, in which audio recognition means is an IVR,

2 and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said second communications channel includes

3 the steps of:

4 (a) causing said PIN to be spoken into said telephone; and

5 (b) recognition of said spoken PIN by said IVR.

- 1 39: A method of selling products at a point-of-sale with subsequent registration of
2 said products, said method comprising the steps of:
- 3 (a) providing a computer data storage apparatus remote from said point-of-sale;
4 (b) providing a package by which a product, is sold at said point-of-sale;
5 (c) providing a kiosk at said point-of-sale for vending said package, said kiosk
6 including a PIN applicator for applying a PIN to said package, said kiosk and
7 said computer data storage apparatus both having a set of PINs that may be
8 vended by said kiosk;
9 (d) selecting a vended PIN from said set of PINs and applying said vended PIN to
10 said package by said PIN applicator; then,
11 (e) vending said package at said point-of-sale by said kiosk; then,
12 (f) registering said product by transmitting said vended PIN over a communications
13 channel to said computer data storage apparatus.

- 1 40: The method as recited in claim 39, in which said package includes a URL via
2 which said computer data storage apparatus may be contacted over said communications
3 channel, and said method further comprises the steps of:
- 4 (a) providing a computer being interfaced to said communications channel; and
5 (b) providing a communications program on said computer;
6 and said step of registering said product further includes, prior to said transmitting of said
7 vended PIN over said communications channel, the steps of:
8 (c) providing said URL to said communications program; and
9 (d) establishing a data connection to said computer data storage apparatus over said
10 communications channel via said URL.

- 1 41: The method as recited in claim 40, in which said step of registering said product
2 further includes the step of transmitting auxiliary registration data over said communications
3 channel to said computer data storage apparatus.

1 42: The method as recited in claim 39, in which said computer data storage apparatus
2 is interfaced to said communications channel via audio recognition means, and said step of
3 registering said product further comprises, prior to said transmitting of said vended PIN over
4 said communications channel, the steps of:

- 5 (a) providing a telephone; and
6 (b) establishing a telephonic connection between said telephone and said audio
7 recognition means over said communications channel;

8 and said step of transmitting of said vended PIN over said communications channel is via
9 said telephone to said audio recognition means.

1 43: The method as recited in claim 42, in which said telephone includes audio tone
2 generation means for generating audio tones and said audio recognition means is a telephonic
3 dialing tones recognizer, and said step of transmitting of said vended PIN over said
4 communications channel includes the steps of:

- 5 (a) causing said audio tone generation means to generate a sequence of telephonic
6 dialing tones representing said vended PIN; and
7 (b) recognition of said sequence of telephonic dialing tones by said telephonic
8 dialing tones recognizer.

1 44: The method as recited in claim 42, in which audio recognition means is an IVR,
2 and said step of transmitting of said PIN over said communications channel includes the
3 steps of:

- 4 (a) causing said PIN to be spoken into said telephone; and
5 (b) recognition of said spoken PIN by said IVR.

1 45: A label for applying to a package, said label having an activation code thereon
2 and said label comprising:

- 3 (a) a substrate having a PIN thereon;
4 (b) a removable opaque covering applied to said substrate over and obscuring said
5 PIN; and
6 (c) an adhesive backing on said substrate.

1 46: The label as recited in claim 45, in which said activation code is on a top surface
2 of said removable opaque covering.

1 47: The label as recited in claim 45, in which said removable opaque covering is a
2 scratch-off opaque covering.

1 48: The label as recited in claim 47, in which said activation code is on a top surface
2 of said removable opaque covering.

1 49: The label as recited in claim 45, in which said removable opaque covering is a
2 peel-off opaque covering.

1 50: The label as recited in claim 49, in which said activation code is on a top surface
2 of said removable opaque covering.